

REIGNING champions, Wycombe Wanderers, meet Barking again tonight (Tuesday, 7.30 p.m.), this time with ground advantage in their favour as they battle for a place in the Premier Floodlight League final against Walton and Hersham.

Walton, who beat Leatherhead 1-0 in the other semi-final play-off, were forced to wait on their opposition after deadlock had been reached at Barking last Thursday.

At Coakes Park tonight, Wycombe line up without injured squad men Larry Pritchard (ankle ligaments) and Vince Faulkner (cut eye).

Keith Blunt, recovering from an operation on a broken nose, will not be playing for the club again. The defender took up an F.A. Regional coaching appointment last month.

As in the two previous 1st-

## BARKING 1 WYCOMBE W. 1

mian fixtures between these sides this season, it was desperately close, and the replay should also prove an intriguing tussle. But Wanderers have at least won ground advantage.

Although playing their third game in four days, Wycombe weathered fierce second half pressure and indeed finished the match on an attacking note. In the forward line they owed much to the shooting power of Bernie Bremer, who scored their goal, while in defence, Kevin O'Brien played capably in goal and Ian Rundle stuck manfully to the difficult task of marking the ever-dangerous Neville Fox.

Although Wycombe looked

by far the more polished side and moved the ball well from defence to attack, they later found the enthusiasm, hard running and direct tactics of the Barking side hard to suppress.

However in the early exchanges Wanderers had things very much their own way. On a dusty, hard pitch, they used the wind advantage to take control. They moved the ball well, while Barking struggled, and this early superiority brought the visitors' success when they scored in the 17th minute. Bremer controlled a pass from the left and beat Hadlow with a 20 yard right-footed drive.

Minutes later a neatly headed pass from Searle to Anthony gave the winger an excellent opportunity but Walters was quick to clear before the Welshman could react. Later, shots on the turn from Keith Searle and Bremer narrowly missed the target.

Towards the interval though, the home side pressed hard for the equaliser. After Rundle had fouled Page on the edge of the penalty box as the forward slipped through, Wycombe conceded four consecutive corners and had a fortunate escape when O'Brien failed to hold Walters' close range shot but Fox shot wide.

The home side plainly wanted to gain an early second-half equaliser and their mid-field players, Sprague, Bradley and Walters, forced Wycombe to pull back eight men in defence.

In a quick breakthrough Wycombe almost sealed the issue when Hadlow missed a high centre from John Hutchinson but Boyton cleared before Searle could reach the ball.

Barking became more creative but lacked the necessary finishing touch. A strong run by Fox left Bradley free but Powell was well placed to clear, and then a run by Wilsonham left four defenders in his wake before John Delaney intervened.

In the 63rd minute Fox completely deceived Rundle on the left, then chested the ball forward to Wilsonham, who stood free on the edge of the box and hit the ball so hard and true that O'Brien was powerless to prevent a goal.

Although Wycombe were forced to withstand pressure following this setback, their defence coped well, and in the last few minutes they could have won the match had Searle's header been a little more accurate.

**WYCOMBE:** O'Brien, Fuchillo, Gale, Rundle, Delaney, Powell, Anthony, Baker, Searle, Bremer, Hutchinson. Sub.: McClean.

**BARKING:** Hadlow, Jones, Butcher, Bullman, Boyton, Walters, Sprague, Wilsonham, Fox, Page, Bradley. Sub.: Long.